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FEB 1

U.S. Dep't of Agriculture

JANUARY WEATHER

A radio talk by Mr. J. B. Kincer, United States Weather Bureau, delivered through Station WRC and 32 other stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, February 5, 1930.

Goodafternoon friends:- How's the weather? You have just heard that we are to talk a few minutes to-day about the weather of January. This is usually the coldest month of the year, but February is a pretty close second. This year, doubtless, many of you will have but few pleasant memories of January weather, and are glad to welcome another month, with hopes for better things.

January made some interesting weather history. From the standpoint of agriculture there were a few favorable aspects, but conditions were mostly adverse. December had generally moderate temperatures, and the first week in January led many to hope that these conditions would continue. This hope was short lived, however, for during the second week King Winter came in from the Northwest with a bang, overspreading the central valley States and the Southwest. There were two severe cold waves over the middle west, the first about the 18th, and the second about a week later. Parts of the Southwest, for example, experienced the most severe cold wave in thirty years, with temperatures as low as 0° slightly lower as far south as Palestine, Tex., and Shreveport, La. In parts of Illinois, the temperature dropped to 25° below zero, and on two occasions, it reached 10° below zero as far south as Fort Smith, Ark. Even in the extreme lower Rio Grande Valley it was 8° below freezing in each of the cold waves.

Our winter cold waves usually move from the Northwest toward the Southeast, but both of these in January moved almost due south over the Great Plains to Texas, and the more southeastern sections of the country escaped, though there was some unusually cold weather in east Gulf districts.

For the month, as a whole, the temperature averaged from 4° to 17° below normal over a large section from Texas and the lower Mississippi Valley northward and northwestward, with the backbone of the cold area extending from southern Texas northwestward to eastern Oregon and Washington. Some parts of this belt had the coldest January of record, while in others it was the coldest since 1875. In the more eastern States, the last half of the month was extremely cold, but the abnormally high temperatures the first half made the average for the month, as a whole, somewhat above normal. This emphasizes the fact that the average temperature for a month does not always give an indication of the real character of the weather through the period.

Precipitation, much of it in the form of snow, was heavy in the central valleys, especially in an area extending from northern Louisiana and eastern Oklahoma northeastward over the lower Missouri and Ohio Valleys, where many districts had from two to as much as three times the usual amount.

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This resulted in a bad flood situation in some places, which was made doubly hard on those affected by the severe temperature conditions. There was also much more than the normal amount of precipitation in the Pacific Southwest, but elsewhere the amounts were mostly scanty.

In a broad sense, there are four aspects of general farming interests most affected by mid-winter weather. These are: The winter wheat situation; conditions as affecting livestock, especially over the great western ranges; the effect of low temperatures on fruit buds, and on winter truck crops in the more southern sections. Farm work is usually more or less at a standstill during January and, consequently, the unfavorable weather this year had no especial significance in that respect, except in the extreme South.

Winter wheat, in general, appears to have maintained a satisfactory condition during the month, due largely to the fact that most principal producing sections had a good snow cover, which afforded the plants protection during the extremely low temperatures. At this time, because of the milder weather, the snow has largely disappeared from the main Wheat Belt, and indications are that the crop came through in pretty good shape, though in parts of the western Plains, principally in western Kansas, there was no snow protection during the cold weather, and the plants were frozen to the ground; it is too early to determine what the effect of this will be.

The month was hard on livestock in the range country, and much shrinkage was reported, with extensive, heavy feeding necessary, but at the same time there was no widespread serious loss, though a considerable number of lambs perished in parts of the far Northwest, especially in eastern Oregon.

Most peach buds have apparently been killed in the Ohio Valley, Missouri, and northern Arkansas; apples appear to have not been badly damaged. There were also reports of damage to soft fruit buds in the interior of the Pacific Northwest where some unusually low temperatures occurred.

Winter truck crops were badly damaged in central and west Gulf sections, especially in Texas, and there was more or less harm in east Gulf districts, but in the Florida Peninsula conditions were largely favorable, as the cold waves did not reach this winter trucking section.